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HB 452

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To Whom It May Concern:

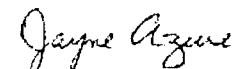
I have been asked to testify regarding a bill in the legislature concerning privacy and information given between doctor, nurse, patient, workman's comp adjuster, attorney; anyone involved in a workman's comp case.

Because of my personal experience, I believe that there should be continued privacy of the information given to the person who files a workman's comp claim and the doctor assigned to the patient. My case was not easy and had lingered on far too long. I filed a work comp claim in 2000 with Northern Montana Hospital because of pain and swelling in my hands and fingers, cervical, thoracic and shoulder pain, and headaches caused by "overuse syndrome" that I incurred from my position as a medical transcriptionist. I was assigned a physician by the hospital's work comp insurer who treated me the entire time I was a work comp patient. During the seven years of being a work comp patient/client I did as asked by my physician and employer, to try to improve my condition. The case seemed to be getting nowhere with all involved. The decision was made to close the case. It was closed in April 2007.

In May of 2007, my privacy was invaded by my employer in that Northern Montana Hospital's personnel director and work comp liaison without my knowledge went to the hospital's ER physician who had previously been my Work Comp physician and asked the physician just what restrictions I had for work. The physician was led to believe that I had contacted my employer to say that I was having further physical problems. He was led to believe that I gave the work comp liaison permission to go to him and inquire about my medical records. This led to a new "Medical Treatment Plan" being written. The physician had no idea of the ramifications that would follow. The case had to go back to Work Comp court. Everyone involved had to come forward to deal with the situation. Wherein if PRIVACY or HIPPA had been upheld for the patient/doctor relationship my former Work Comp physician and myself would not have been blindsided by the fact that I had no knowledge of the meeting taking place with the personnel director and work comp liaison and there would not have been the horrific mess that ensued. I was forced to work part-time or quit, I lost half of my wages, my medical insurance tripled and to date I have been unable to obtain full-time employment.

This letter of testimony is a living example of why the privacy laws should be upheld in Work Comp cases and that every one involved needs to be informed of what is happening.

Sincerely,

  
Jayne Azure